

## **SUPPLEMENTARY TEXT 1: INITIAL THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

The framework synthesis method is theory-driven, involving the development of an initial theoretical framework that is then iteratively tested and modified using the empirical findings of the review. This theoretically pluralistic approach to the qualitative analysis of a complex social phenomenon (in this case, political commitment) is more robust than the use of a single theory alone.<sup>1</sup> On this basis, three theoretical frameworks were drawn upon to guide the development of an initial theoretical framework. These were identified through a preliminary search of the nutrition policy literature using the Google Scholar search engine (including the ‘related articles’ feature) and combinations of nutrition, policy and theory relevant search terms.

Kingdon’s multiple streams theory, Shiffman & Smith’s global health priority-setting framework, and Heaver’s work on political commitment for nutrition were subsequently chosen for their relevance (i.e. explicit focus on agenda-setting, policy change and commitment), frequency of use in the nutrition policy literature, and complementarity (i.e. together they offer a more complete set of theorised factors within ‘nutrition systems’). The selection of these theories was further supported by their inclusion in a recent theoretical ‘tool pool’ for analysing the politics of nutrition policy.<sup>2</sup> These frameworks have also been articulated clearly in several empirical nutrition policy studies.<sup>3-5</sup>

Kingdon’s multiple streams theory maintains that for an issue to receive priority on a government agenda three independent streams must converge: the problem stream, where an issue is defined, portrayed and politicized in public discourse; the policy stream, where a number of alternative policy solutions are proposed to address the problem; and the politics stream, where political events create opportunities for policy reform.<sup>6</sup> During critical time periods known as ‘policy windows’ these three streams converge and the probability of an issue ‘launching’ onto a government agenda increases. This convergence can be facilitated by policy entrepreneurs, (highly-capable and politically-savvy technical experts) and policy advocates (high-profile individuals such as ministers or heads of state).<sup>6</sup>

Shiffman and Smith extend Kingdon’s theory, and integrate several others, to develop a framework on global health priority-setting.<sup>7-8</sup> This proposes a number of variables that increase the probability of health issues receiving political priority organized into four categories: the power of actors involved, the power of ideas actors use to interpret and portray their issue, the political and institutional contexts within which they operate, and the characteristics of the issue they address.

Policy communities (i.e. networks of individuals and organizations who share a common concern for an issue) are more likely to achieve priority for their issue when they are cohesive, led by champions for the cause, and when they publicly portray the problem and solutions in ways that resonate with external audiences (and particularly the political decision-makers who control resources). Importantly, the framework acknowledges the role of governance structures, including the norms (dominant belief systems and practices) and the institutions that enforce these norms within a given sector or jurisdiction.

Heaver, drawing upon the development studies literature, conceptualises the term ‘commitment’, describes many of the unique features of nutrition as a policy problem, elaborates on the complex multi-sectoral and multi-level institutional arrangements required, and the political or bureaucratic interests of those involved in nutrition policy responses.<sup>9</sup>

Feedback loops (described as ‘low-priority cycles’) are identified whereby the failure to generate and sustain commitment can result in limited policy and programming impact, which reinforces lack of commitment. Importantly, it is acknowledged that commitment is required from political leaders, but also from the civil servants, implementation managers, civil society officials, communities, donors and others. It is acknowledged that the ‘commitment challenge’ is very much a ‘capacity challenge’ (i.e. actors must be both willing *and* able) and that ‘commitment-building’ requires operational and strategic capacity of those working within and attempting to influence a given political system.

Table 2. Integrated theoretical framework used to guide the review

<i>Category</i>	<i>Factors</i>
Power of actors	Nutrition policy network cohesion
	Leadership
	Civil society mobilization
	Donors, international organizations and global initiatives
	Guiding institutions
Political and societal contexts	Political transitions
	Societal conditions & focusing events
	Global factors
	Ideology and norms
Framing	Internal framing
	External framing
Issue characteristics	Credible indicators
	Viable evidence-based solutions
	Issue visibility
Capacities and resources	Organizational and strategic capacities
	Financial resources

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